THE BOOSTER'S HONEYMOON

WHEN IS A HICK?

By WALLACE IRWIN

Illustrated By Norman Anthony

THE Booster Has Married Betsy Spencer and They Have Started for New York to Spend Their Honeymoon. The Booster Had Never Seen New York. Neither Had Betsy. Their Exciting Adventures in the Most Romantic City in America—Their Perplexities, the Strange Coincidences That Befall Them and the Wonderful Outcome of Their Experiences—Are Told in the Following Story.

"MAPLE-HONEY-KID!" Brian Born Blaney leaned from Pullman seat 25 and thus addressed himself to the somber orbs of light becomingly set in the features of the very new Mrs. Blaney, that lady being comfortably cushioned in Pullman seat 27.

"Sugar-boy-dear!" responded the previously matter-of-fact Betsy. Then, with a momentary lapse into sanity, she whispered: "Brian, the whole car is looking at us!"

Responsive to the warning, Brian made a sudden movement, and several handfuls of rice clattered to the floor from various parts of his clothing.

"Darn that godspeed stuff!" he grumbled. "The more I see of rice the worse I hate Japs."

He removed his hat and shook therefrom a miniature hailstorm. The entire car tittered—there was an excursion of rather young Boston schoolma'ams returning from San Bruno. Brian blushed to the roots of his auburn hair, then his cheeks wrinkled to a broad grin. His was one of those natures to whom publicity in any form can never be quite distasteful.

"Enjoy yourselves, girls!" he smiled, bowing to his appreciative audience. On the lapel of his coat hung a bright blue button nearly as large as a saucer and labeled: "Boost for San Bruno." This token, as well as an enormous harp-shaped floral emblem which reposed between their chairs, bearing the word "boost" in white carnations, was the gift of the San Bruno Boosters' Club, which organization had accompanied them to the station with enthusiasm, a brass band, and the city's surplus of overshoes.

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BRIAN'S salute to the assembled schoolma'ams was well received by all save Betsy, who sat for several minutes with her eyes averted toward the whirling landscape.

"Sugar," she said at last, "I wish you'd take that thing"—pointing to the booster button—"and put it in your pocket. And I wish you'd give that"—indicating the floral emblem—"to the porter. It reminds me of an Elks' funeral."

"Now, Candy-bag!" protested Brian, in a hurt tone, "we ain't ashamed of the home town, are we?"

"You bet we aren't!" agreed Betsy warmly. "And that's why I think it's up to us not to make the home town ridiculous."

"Forter!" said Brian, with one hand beckoning the menial and the other pointing out the floral emblem. "Bear away the tribute!"

He slipped the booster button quietly into his pocket.

"You, old dandy thing!" Thus she rewarded him. He sat awhile in unnatural silence.

"Funny!" he said, at last. "Those are the very words Obrey O'Malley said to me this morning."

"What words?"

"'Don't make the home town ridiculous.' Y' know, when the Boosters took us to the train, C. W. Ketchum pullin' my arm loose at the socket while kittenish Sid Eidlitz poured 18 cents' worth o' rice down my collar? Well, old Obrey O'Malley led me aside for a minute. Uncle Obe's got more sense in his upper right-hand eyelash than Ketchum can hire in his whole office force. 'Brian,' says Obrey, 'you're going to see N' York for the first time. It's a great big town full o' things a young man can slip up on and fall over. I hope you won't think me impertinent, but I want to give you a word of advice—don't be a hick.'"

"What's a hick?" asked Betsy.

"A hick is a dressed-up Rube out hunting for a shell game," he defined it. "'I've lived in N' York for forty years,' O'Malley went on, 'and I know it from Wall street to the Plaza. Take it from me, it's up to the stranger coming fresh from the clover to sing low, because every inhabitant of Manhattan Island has got the art of financial transgressions down to a poisoned pellet. The graft industry is overcrowded there, and N' York would naturally starve if it wasn't for the man from home who comes piking down Broadway with his check book in his hand and a sprig of timothy over his ear. Lifelong practice at the art of bunk has made the N' Yorkers so darned canny they can steal your clothes, ship you home in a borrowed nightie, and make you think you've had a good time. So take an old man's tip. When you come in sight of the Statue of Liberty, step light, sing low, and, for Gawsh sake, don't let 'em know you're a hick!'"

"Maybe we'd better go to Niagara Falls, after all!" Betsy faltered.

"I says to O'Malley," Brian went on, "'Uncle Obe, what can I do to conceal my hickory origin?'

"'I'll give you a few don'ts for hicks,' says O'Malley. 'Don't smoke a cigar with a band on it. Don't get up in street cars and offer a lady your seat. Don't let the barber shave the back of your neck. Don't talk politics with strangers. Don't wear tan shoes with buttons on 'em.'" (Furtively Betsy noted that her husband's shoes were of the kind described.) "'Don't drink Volstead hyphenated Manhattan cocktails. Don't be ashamed to walk over people's knees in the theater. And don't offend the head waiter by trying to tip him in public. Those are a few rough rules which may keep you a while out of the Order of Straw along the Great White Graft, says Uncle Obe.'"

"That was thoughtful of him," Betsy intimated.

"Y-yes," agreed Brian grudgingly. "But it makes me kind o' sore. What brand o' lobsters do those N' York dudes eat that makes 'em so all-fired brighter'n the rest o' the country? Can't an Indian from another reservation blow in with his war-paint and not——"

"They're naturally lots more experienced than we are, living as they do in the midst of things," she suggested.

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"UM. O'MALLY gave me this letter of introduction." Brian fished a large envelope from his inner pocket. "Said it was to a real N' Yorker—a fella belonging to a Knickerbocker family so old it considers the Vanderbilts vulgar tradespeople; said that if I ever got skinned in any sort of a bilk I could go round to this keen young guy and he'd pull me out. Nice of him, wasn't it?"

"It certainly was," agreed Betsy. She opened the flap of the envelope and read:

Dear Dyckman:

This is to introduce Mr. Brian Boru Blaney, who has come, for the first time, to see the town. You'll be doing a favor to your father's old chum if you take my young friend under your wing now and then and steer him clear of any of your city's justly celebrated pitfalls. With regards to your dad, sincerely,

OBREY O'MALLEY.

"Now you must present this letter as soon as we get to New York," said Betsy, in a slightly abashed tone.

Brian turned the envelope critically in his hand, reading the address at every conceivable angle.

"Mr. Dyckman Wynkoop, 13½ Washington Square," he read aloud; then added: "That ain't a name; it's a label or an imported cheese."

Just the same, Brian was impressed and was discovered gazing disgustedly at his buttoned tan shoes at intervals during the trip.

They were amid the horrific grandeurs of the Royal George, battling ground of Titans (according to prospectus), when an impertinent intrusion appeared in the person of G. Hunter McCosh. Sight-seeing passengers were assembled in the observation car, huddled around each window, to let no marvel pass. Roaring through chasms measureless to man brow-beaten by infernal crags, the soft coal smoke of the D. & R. G locomotive added that Stygian touch so well portrayed by the late Mr. Dante. Some passengers were regarding the Devil's Needle and saying, "Ah!" Yet others were looking at the far-piled Ogre's Dungeon and remarking "Oh!" But Brian and Betsy were looking into each other's eyes, and the latter was exclaiming, "You dear old red-headed proposition——"

"Just look at that!" said a resonant voice at their shoulders. "Just look at that!"

A large, florid elderly gentleman with eyeglasses and a toothbrush mustache spread over the bridal couple a prominent plaid suit in a pattern reminiscent of the costume worn by George IV while shooting grouse on the Highland estate of the Mackintosh of Mackintosh. He fairly crowded in between them and pointed out of the window. "Behold yon masterpiece of nature's antic art, appalling cataclysm of a planet's dawn, ne'er limned by any human paintbrush, sir! There they stand, sir. Rocks! Craggy rocks! Fit for some race of demi-gods——"

"Jaggy rocks fit for some race of demijohns—I gotcha," said Brian appreciatively.

"You may sing, young man," continued the eloquent stranger, "of the terrors of the boundless deep or the wonders of the tropic night—but look at those rocks. By ginger, ain't they great?"

"In the real estate business?" inquired Brian affably.

"Well, no—not exactly."

"I thought by the way you went at us," continued the Little Booster, "that you were trying to sell us the Rocky mountains on the easy-payment plan."

"Ah, youth!" rhapsodized the big one. "Youth will have its quip at the wisdom of age. Youth and love. I see you're a bridal couple. I hope, madam," turning a ravishing smile upon Betsy, "that you can spare your husband a moment." Turning to Brian with a suspiciously glib motion of the thumb and forefinger. "Play cards, sir?"

"Not with you," announced Brian, looking the other coolly between the eyes. "I trust I'm not making a nuisance of myself——"

"Not yet," replied Brian, turning for the first time in the direction of the scenery.

"My name is McCosh—G. Hunter McCosh," said the florid person, still smiling. "Any time you want to look me up, I'm in car 3." He strode jauntily away.

"Oh, Sugar Boy, how rude of you!" Betsy chided, as soon as the other man had gone.

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"TAKE it from me, Betsy," said Brian, in rather a depressed tone, "that old guy's phoney. I don't know what he's got to sell, but I bet he makes it in a dark room. I wonder why he picked me out?" He looked reflectively at his toes, and remembered the warning words of O'Malley. "Gawsh! I wonder if he saw my buttoned tans!"

The further they rushed eastward, the more earnestly Brian hated his shoes as a recognized badge of Hickdom. He did not look up Mr. McCosh in car 3, but that thoughtful gentleman made occasion to sit down next to Brian in the buffet when the latter was enjoying a solitary cigarette. They were approaching Chicago at the time, and McCosh sat paring his broad fingernails with a pearl-handled knife.

"Try one of my perfectos," he said suddenly, offering an ostentatious roll of tinfoil.

"Thanks; I never smoke," responded Brian, taking a fresh cigarette from his box.

"Say, you're a cagey kid, all right," laughed the big one, changing from the grandiloquent to the vernacular. His eyes slanted and his weather-beaten mouth came down at one corner. "What's your line?".

"I'm a fly-catcher."

"Haw-haw! You're a smart kid, anyhow. Now, look here. As an enterprisin' young business man from the west, launchin' out on life's voyage with a fair young helpmeet, and awaitin' alert and joyous to hear the welcome knock of Opportunity at your door—Opportunity, the goddess who knocks but once—you are unspoiled, you are ambitious, too smart to let the golden moment pass unheeded. Ever thought of investin' in mining stocks?"

"Show me," said Brian in a level tone.

"As you see by my card"—he extended a square of pasteboard—"I am general director of the Goodfellow and Surprise Gold Lode Company, Incorporated."

"Phew! Is it as bad as that?"

"Have your joke!" growled Mr. McCosh. "But the old must be patient with the young. I want to talk to you like an uncle. I want to put you on the ground floor in this unparalleled proposition, a chance we only offer our particular friends. I like your face."

Mr. McCosh's fat fingers deftly unfolded a bale of handsomely printed papers engraved in rich orange, the seal of Nevada at the head, an intricate, wavy border down the margins. He had a compelling palm on Brian's knee.

"In six months from now they'll pay you twenty-five cents on the dollar—twen-ty-five per cent!"

"Honest," said Brian, carefully folding the stocks and handing them back; "you're the coarsest Wallingford make-up I've struck yet."

"How's that?" spluttered the big one.

"Excuse me, while I take a good look at you. I thought they had all the old-style con men stuffed and under glass by this time. And to think of one of you whiskered dodos tryin' to panhandle me—me—with a line o' minin' stock fluff that was passed up by Adam and Eve. Say, old man, I'm sorry for you. You make me want to cry. Your childish stab at dishonesty is sadder'n Uncle Tom's Cabin' and twice as stale. Say, what play town are you going to work with that line o' country-fair bilk?"

"New York," said Mr. McCosh, with simple dignity.

"What!" The word came like a pistol shot. "With that? Why, Uncle Rufus, you've got no more show in New York with that prehistoric swindle than a glass bead on 5th avenue. Honest, they teach better grafts than that in the New York public schools. Why don't you stick to St. Jo, uncle, where the grass is long and the grazing good?"

The face of the honest Mr. McCosh suddenly settled into tragic lines.

"If I'd 'a' known you was one of us," he began sadly. He made the sign of Three Walnuts between his thumb and fingers. "If I'd known you was in our line o' goods, I'd never come that con on you. But, since you mention St. Jo, I'll put you wise to something. The middle west circuit's worked dry. I had to borrow from the constable to get out of Emporia, and in Keokuk I was blackmailed poor by a rube I tried the badger game on."

"So you're advancin' on New York."

"That's the stuff! The only town in America where you can catch the hick off his nest with the golden eggs exposed. I got a cousin doin' well there on the old glass-ring game."

"Yes, but look at the competition!" Brian objected. "There's three bunks there to every hick. And what's your homemade mining swindle against the kind of graft they make by machinery?"

"Well, I'm gettin' old," sighed the swindler. "But a fresh train load o' straw arrives at the New York Central every fifteen minutes. This is my last stand—maybe I won't have to keep bar in my old age."

"If you ain't skinned poor before you've been in New York a week, come around to me and I'll buy some of your goods," said Brian kindly, but with deep foreboding; for he was still mindful of O'Malley's tale of what greedy Gotham does to the native outsider.

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IT is the conventional thing for the newcomer in New York to pause Aladdin-like, mind whirling, eyes blinking at the magic works of these djinns who have bewitched mankind. Shall he fly first to the Metropolitan Museum or shall it be the Metropolitan Tower? Shall he climb the Statue of Liberty or descend into the subway? But Brian Boru Blaney, his feet set on Manhattan, was tortured by no such doubts. He called a taxi at the Grand Central station, and after tucking his baggage and his Betsy safely inside, called commandingly to the chauffeur: "Beat it for the first shoe store on 5th avenue."

Betsy all but plunged herself headlong several times in passing window displays of feminine attire, and as they whirled by the emporium of a famous milliner, she cried, with almost a sob in her voice: "Brian, you've just got to stop here!" But her auburn-haired lord had his eyes set sternly to the fore. They drew up before a plate-glass window with masculine footwear discreetly displayed.

"Nope," he announced to the smiling clerk, "I don't want anything similar to what I got on. Gimme something like Vince Astor kicks around in."

They sold him a pair with tapering toes flat soles and unostentatious eyelets. They cost him $18.

"Score one" said Brian, making a mark on his cuff as he paid the bill. He wore the shoes out of the shop. "Now that I got rid o' those hick kicks, I guess we'll be safe to walk along 5th avenue, paying the taxes here and there."

At the famous milliner's Betsy chose a hat with very little on it, but that well disposed. The bill was $65.

"Score two" announced Brian, making another mark on his cuff.

"What on earth are you doing, Sugar?" asked his wife.

"Keepin' tab on New York. We've been here half an hour and she's got us 82 bucks already.

They took a room at the St. Sidon Hotel, a fabulous pile overlooking Broadway's busiest corner.

"I'm tired already," said Betsy, throwing herself on a gilded chaise-longue.

"When I look at a dump like this," remarked the Little Booster, "I feel like the King o' Persia—afraid to sit down for fear some of the gold leaf 'll stick to my pants." He walked over to the window and looked down on the restless human stream flowing below. "I bet N' York's got more ticket speculators than San Bruno's got population. Look! there's a lame horse has just sat down in front of a milk wagon and tied up all the rapid transit from here to the Bronx. Careless Dobbin!"

After lunch Brian complained of his new shoes pinching, but he bravely kept his footing within their resisting soles and plunged still further into the gulf of conventionality by changing to a suit of quiet gray and an inoffensive necktie.

"Going far?" inquired Betsy sleepily from her couch.

"To 13½ Washington square," he said. "I'm going to present O'Malley's letter to Dyckman Wynkoop to see if he's cheese or human. What to come along?"

"No, you little old big foolish; I'm not being introduced. I suppose we're going somewhere tonight——"

"Bet your fairy goloshes we're goin' somewhere. As soon as the ads begin to light up along the Great White Way we'll beat it for one o' those dansong restaurants. Tonight's the big, wide evening!"

Brian fixed his hat at a dangerous angle in the midst of a dance figure which ended in an ardent embrace of his girlish bride.

"Don't let any bunco man see you while you're in that mood," she cautioned. "Remember, you're a hick in a great city."

About 6 o'clock he came whistling back, his face afire with enthusiasm.

"Did you find him?" asked Betsy, who was waiting, with the patience of an experienced wife, to be hooked up in the back.

"Who? Dyckie Chickencoop? Nope. Say, Dyckie lives in a boy's-size brick palace with a white door, and a brass knocker. When I banged the knob, out shoots a Woodrow Wilson effect in butlers. 'Not to hum!' he says. When I called him Charley, he snatched my card away from me and slammed the door so quick he 'most pinched off my nose."

"Sugar Boy, he probably saw you were a——"

"Hick? Yes. But how did he know? So I hired an open taxi and sailed forth to discover N' York."

"What did you see?"

"Saw the Woolworth building, a Jew cop arrestin' a drunken Armenian, the Brooklyn bridge, a fight, a Wall street panic, the Pennsylvania station and Leon Errol tryin' to light a cigar on a windy corner."

"Anything else?"

"I saw a hick. Right before my eyes. Y' see, I dropped my taxi at 14th street, and ducked into the subway just to get a taste of that celebrated canned air. And what d' you think I saw, the first thing? A rube got up and gave his seat to a lady. I was sitting comfortably on somebody's mother at the time, and I wanted to lead that hick aside and say, 'Not done, old chap—not in New York'; but I let him go his suicidal way. Wallingford'll get him before morning."

They dined beneath golden cornices, beside roseate tapestries, eating from precious plate and draining goblets of brilliant crystal.

"Don't make any quick moves," Brian cautioned his wife, "because every time you do it starts a waiter this way, and that costs you $5 extra."

The bill was $19.

"Score three!" warbled Brian, keeping imaginary tab on his cuff. He led Betsy rather hastily toward the foyer. It was getting on toward 10 o'clock, and round the corner, glaring amid the infernal glories of jumping gigantic electric images, stood the Cabaret de l'Obsterre, home of jazz.

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MOST of the tables were already taken when they entered. Young Mrs. Blaney was not too young to note the two types of women—those who had come and those who had been brought—the former characterized by elaborate complexions inside infantile hats; their lips were bold, their eyes were cold. The band uttered a musical compound of treacle and dynamite; a negro nobleman endowed with India-rubber joints rolled his eyes swimmingly and smote his palms together to an ecstatic "Buzz around—buzz around!" until a young mulatto woman, lithe as a spider monkey, threw herself at him in an acrobatic tango which included touching her wool to the carpet in miraculous backward loops.

"Let's twirl!" came Brian's enthusiastic voice in Betsy's ear, for the band had now struck up "We'll Row, Row, Row," and many couples took the floor, every Jack to his Jill, every Bacchus to his Bacchante. By way of divertissement, a Princeton gladiator had arisen from a tableful of college boys and was inviting the head waiter to put him out.

"Let's go!" pleaded Betsy, seizing Brian's arm.

"Stick around, kid," Brian urged. "We needn't be afraid of this dansong stuff. All New York's doin' it."

"I bet half the men here are traveling salesmen from Duluth. Don't be a hick!" This was Betsy's quelling word.

"Speaking of hicks," whispered her husband, nudging her sharply, "look what's just come in!"

"Who is he?"

"The Rube I saw give his seat to a lady in the subway. He's hopeless!" For, even at the word, the newcomer—who wore buttoned tan shoes—was ordering a Manhattan Volstead hyphenated cocktail.

"He must be the King of the Hickories," murmured Brian, becoming more and more concerned. Ain't it pitiful!" The object of Brian's commiseration called to him the head waiter, and, in the presence of the whole room, handed him a five-dollar bill. Then he lit a cigar, and kept the band on.

"He's got every one of O'Malley's 'How to Tell a Hick' marks except he don't shave his neck. Probably he's waitin' for the barber shop to open in the morning."

"He's rather nice looking," said Betsy, "and wears a good suit of clothes."

"Whiskers! There ought to be a society for the protection of him. I've a good mind to give that lone yokel a tip before he falls in the hands of ——"

Down the aisle came a florid, familiar face. The head waiter pulled out a chair next to the unprotected stray. And the person who occupied the seat, presenting a cordial palm to the helpless hick, was none other than G. Hunter McCosh, the superannuated bunko man of the D. & R. G.

McCosh's broad back was toward Brian, therefore he could not see his neighbors, although close enough to be easily overheard. Brian quickly forgot the charms of tango in the study of bunko as the elderly rascal laid his fat palm caressingly over the hand of the younger man, who was neat and rather small, with oyster-colored eyes and a sallow mustache.

"No, my boy; you can't afford to miss this," began McCosh, in the tone of thick gravy. "Take an old man's advice and——" The rest was lost in the musical racket.

"If you can prove they're as good as——" the young man was heard to say.

"Opportunity knocks but once at the door * * * good as smelted gold * * * as proved by our specimens"—these scraps in McCosh's soothing tone.

"If we could only find a place to talk more quietly——"

"It is kinda noisy here," McCosh admitted. "Supposing you and me go over to Gothamia grill * * * the details of this splendid proposition."

"Come on!" breathed Brian in Betsy's ear.

"Where?"

"To the Gothamia grill!"

It was easy to see why the more or less skillful Mr. McCosh had chosen the Gothamia grill. A luncheon room in one of the largest hotels, it opens, flower-like, at the hour of noon, and dozes again at sunset, when the interest is diverted to the Fragonard dining room upstairs or the Bohemian music hall in the basement. During the evening hours the Gothamia grill assumes the elderly quiet of a Union League Club; but under shaded lights men and women talk mysteriously at secluded tables.

"A gunman's delight!" exclaimed Brian. "If I stabbed a man here and dragged him into the elevator, how would the newspapers ever catch me? * * * Waiter!" A blue Alsatian mountaineer approached glibly, and took his order.

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THE waiter retreated, and the door was darkened by the shadow of a porpous person leading a slender youth of hesitating mien.

"Pretty work!" murmured Brian. They sat at a table far out of earshot, but well within view. The hypnotist was evidently imbuing his subject with enthusiasm, confidence, honest conviction, for the fat hands of Mr. McCosh were working busily in circles more complicated than any Futurist's dream. And the dupe looked up with the expression of a tired child who hears a new fairy story and loves to believe it true.

"O Maud, what a sucker!" sniffed Brian. "He wants to bite so bad, he's helping put the bait on the hook."

The two figures at the distant table leaned back. Something was settled. The elder man brought forth a packet of papers folded lengthwise.

"McCosh was right," said Brian. "You can make the man from Keokuk do stunts in N' York he's never dreamt of in his home town."

"Maybe it's not so bad as you think," suggested Betsy.

"Didn't you see the orange-colored engravings on the paper? That's Goodfellow and Surprise bunk he's sellin' the hick—and look! Rube's pullin' his check-book!"

Sure enough, the lamb was already reaching for McCosh's fountain-pen. There was a moment of intense scribbling, during which McCosh bit a black cigar and forgot to light it. Finally a pink leaf from the check-book fluttered in his palm, and he handled it like a rare orchid. An instant later Mr. McCosh was seen to rise rather feverishly, button his coat over the new-made check, extend a loving hand to his victim, and stride forth into the unknown. Brian jumped from his chair.

"You're not going to——"

"You bet I am! As a stranger in town, I ain't a-goin' to sit here and see my helpless brother skun bright red on Broadway."

The young man sat reading an orange-printed sheet of Goodfellow and Surprise rapturously, even as the Moslem scans the Koran, when Brian accosted him.

"Excuse me!" said the Little Booster. "I don't know what part of the woolly west you come from, but you'll take back less wool than you brought with you."

"Meaning?" inquired the youth, adjusting his eyeglasses.

"Do you know who that bunk is you just——"

"That 'bunk,' as you roughly term him," said the young man in a modulated baritone, "is Mr. Hotchkiss, well known in the Goodfellow and——"

"His name was McCosh when I met him. Now, listen to mother. There ain't any time to feed the chickens. I'm telling you. You've just fallen for a man who's a professional walnut-pusher, a dot-and-carry card-holder, a life member of the Gold Brick Layers' Union—in plain Californian, a bunko man. Because you left your brains the other side of the Ohio river I'll wise you. You've been bilked, trimmed——"

"But he came to New York with the highest references."

"Splash! I've a good mind to touch you for a thousand myself. How much was in that check you just signed?"

"Forty-five hundred and fifty."

"Get your bank the first thing in the morning and stop it."

"Lord!" groaned the callow one. "It's on the Night and Day Bank!"

"Telephone—hot foot, kid!"

The sedate grill-room was enlivened by the sight of a red-headed enthusiast dragging a dazzled youth across two chairs toward the telephone booth. A few minutes later Betsy, to her relief, beheld her husband returning calmly with the newfound hick.

"Now, Marcus," Brian was saying, "we've got to kite it over to the Night and Day and identify you. Friend wife and I'll tag along to see that the rest of your wad don't jump out of the window."

The hick had a taxi—waiting by the hour apparently—outside. As they bumped over New York's asphalt, which, like her sky line, is picturesque but uneven, Betsy tried to soothe the stranger with commonplaces.

"Doesn't it seem grand in New York after the country?" she asked.

"It does," said the hick forlornly.

When he emerged from the sleepless portals of the Night and Day there were tears in his pale orbs, suggestive of sea food.

"They fixed it—but it hurts me to think I've been betrayed by a friend," he sobbed.

"That's what they all say," chirped Brian brightly. "Now, Mrs. Bride and I'll escort you past the bogies to your hotel."

The young man gave a number to the chauffeur.

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"NOW, look you, son," Brian went on, for he must have his lecture. He put his hand patronizingly now on the hick's knee. "I just got to hand it out. Take it or leave it. When in Rome you gotta do as the Romeos do. Don't talk to large men with fancy vests. Maybe you'll thank me for this when you get back to the home town."

"It's not my fault. It's the way the old man raised me," the callow one moaned. "Never letting me go into business like other fellows."

"Say!" Brian had an inspiration. "If you ever want a wise guy to take you around N' York, ring me up. I'm at the St. Sidon. Stick around, kid, and I'll show you all the new stuff."

"Thanks, awfully," said the hick.

The taxi stopped before a brick house with a white door.

"You've pulled me out of an awful hole, old man," he continued, as he stepped out. "I'd like to see more of you. Here's my card."

The hick's face stared into the taxi door, pale and anxious. Brian, as he accepted the card, felt a thrill of remorse. Perhaps he had been a bit rough in his language to this outsider, who, after all, would learn his New York in time. Under the flickering corner light Brian held the card, spelling each letter carefully. Then he put it in his pocket. Already the hick was disappearing up the front steps.

"Say!" said Brian, calling after him, and again looking at the name on the card, 'I got a letter of introduction to you."

And, as the hick returned, the Little Booster brought forth O'Malley's envelope addressed to Mr. Dyckman Wynkoop, 13½ Washington Square.

"I thought I might as well hand it to you now, seein' I'm around your way."

(Copyright, 1921.)

McCOSH WAS SEEN TO RISE FEVERISHLY, EXTEND A LOVING HAND TO HIS VICTIM, AND STRIDE FORTH INTO THE UNKNOWN.

That Game of Foot Ball

By Ring W. Lardner.

TO the editor: Well friends here it is the middle of the football season and maybe your favorite team looks like it will win the championship, and I don't want to be no kill joy but I can't resist from telling you what a treat you missed this fall namely I was going to write up some of the big games down east but at the last minute the boss said no. He didn't state no reasons but I wouldn't be surprised if I knew what they was and I guess he is right for once. I don't know nothing about the game but that don't seem to stop a few of the other boys that is writeing it up and I doubt if my mgr. took that part of it into considerations but I guess he felt like my write ups would be kind of silly and I might get smart and introduce a spirit of levity into my write ups which would be out of keeping with a game which is almost sacred you might say and the coaches and aluminum of all the different colleges would be off of me for life.

Then in the 2d. place maybe he asked the different newspapers if they wanted the stuff and they all said no. If that is the case it may of had something to do with his decision as he is funny that way.

Well anyway I ain't going to write up no football games but wile we are on the subject I would like to say a few wds. in regards to this great autumn complaint and firstly I beg to assure my readers that when informed that my services as football reporter was neither required or desired I managed to not break down in public because I once had that job for several seasons and I wouldn't number it amongst the melons of journalism.

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FROM the middle of Sept. till xmas a football reporter can't go in his office without they's a bunch of letters from students or old grads or the coaches themselfs and the letters always starts out by calling you some name and then the writer goes on to say why don't you give more space to the old Yellow and Pink. All we ask is a square deal, but we ain't getting it. By a square deal they mean 8 columns about the old Yellow and Pink and nothing about nobody else and the 8 columns has got to be 8 columns of glory hallelujah.

Maybe it's necessary to mention that the Yellow and Pink was beat 98 to 0 last Saturday by the Old Mauve, but you are supposed to excuse this on the grounds that Buster Gifford, the Yellow quarterback, was out of the game with a hangnail, but even at that the old Yellow would of rallied and tied the score in the 4th period only just as they was getting started. Jesse James, the head lineman, called an offside and the 5 yd. penalty took the heart out of our boys. Coach Dinglebury says the penalty was a outrage as none of his men was ever offside in their life. He had learned them different.

Well friends when a man is a foot-ball reporter he gets acquainted with the different coaches and asst. coaches and they's a few of them that is as good fellows as you want to meet a specially some of the asst. coaches and some of my best friends is asst. coaches and a few head coaches too. And if any of the last named is reading this article I want them to understand that they are not the ones I am talking mean about. It's the ones that ain't reading this article that I refer to when I say that they's no class of people that compares with head coaches when it comes to fair mindness unless it's the boys that wrote the official communiques dureing the war.

Dureing my turn of service as a foot ball expert they was numerous occasions when different head coaches spent the sabbath writeing a letter to my sporting editor asking him to give me the air as a special favor to them. And they was also 2 occasions when coaches wrote to him and said that my write up of their game the day before was the best foot ball report they had ever read and lest my readers should think I am bragging I will hasten to exclaim that in each of these 2 cases the teams who these gents coached had win a close game and my articles was nothing but hymns of praise for how well the teams was coached.

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ONE of a foot ball reporter's little chores is generally to look up both coaches after the game and see what they have got to say for themself. The coach of the winning team pretty near kisses you but you don't no sooner than lay eyes on the other guy when you realize for the first time that the result of the game was your fault. I won't repeat none of the alibis that these birds have thought up as you would think I was copying out of Joe Miller's joke book but instead of that I will tell you about the time I got the surprise of my young life and that was up to Ann Arbor, Mich. Cornell and Michigan had just had a alleged contest and the score was something like 35 to 10 in favor of Cornell. So afterwards I went in the Michigan dressing rm. to see Mr. Yost and there he was smileing from ear to ear and I says:

"Well what about it?"

"Well," he says, "I guess we was lucky to score."

The trainer worked on me for a hr. I don't know how they are running it out west now days but here in the east the coaches has a meeting in the off season and picks out the officials for their next season's games and here is another place where fair play and sport for sports sake comes leaping to the surface like a ton of lead. I don't need to go into no details but it would be kind of fun to see the same system tried out in big league base ball, namely let the managers pick out their own umpires. As soon as a ball club lost a game why the manager would say, "He can't never umpire no more games for me" and when 8 games was lost the manager would be out of umpires and congress would half to pass conscription.

And it would also be fun if the foot ball coaches was allowed to tell the newspapers who they could send to report their games. A lot of the boys that is now writeing up the games would have their Saturdays free for golf.

RING W. LARDNER.

Great Neck, Nov. 5.

"THE TRAINER WORKED ON ME FOR A HOUR."

Graphite Paint.

THE growing exclusion of lead from paint on the ground of its poisonous character has led to the introduction of graphite as a substitute, particularly in the place of red lead in the painting of iron. Mixed with linseed oil, graphite protects the iron well against rust and is much cheaper than red lead. So many uses have been found for graphite, which not many years ago was employed almost exclusively for the manufacture of lead pencils, that large quantities are now made with the electric furnace, the natural deposits of the mineral not being sufficient to supply the demand.

Capital Sidelights

BY WILL P. KENNEDY.

Here's a man who finds it cheaper to travel than to live at home,—Representative Ackerman of Plainfield, N. J., who happens to be first man on the House roll call. He is the most traveled man in Congress, but that isn't because he has found it cheaper to travel, for he is very wealthy and doesn't have to economize. He spent the summer in Europe, and says that while traveling around there he actually saved enough from his normal living expenses to amortize the first cost of getting transportation across the ocean.

For a railroad ticket from Bologne to Berlin, a distance of 342 miles, where the fare before the war was $12.50 to $15, he paid $3. A sleeping car stateroom now costs less than 86 cents. In Vienna a first-class seat in the orchestra for the opera costs about 60 cents, or less than the tax paid to the United Stataes government alone for a seat in the Mertopolitan Opera House, New York. He has the checks showing that an afternoon tea for two in a first class hotel in Vienna cost less than 20 cents and a course dinner for three cost about 90 cents.

Representative Ackerman brought back to this country some of the first tokens issued by the Chamber of Commerce of France in retiring the war-time paper currency. He has given some of these to his close friends as pocket pieces. As a member of the foreign affairs committee he was able to give Chairman Fordney of the ways and means committee first-hand information regarding the startling depreciation of enemy currency. He brought back a 10,000 kronen note of Austria-Hungary, which was worth more than $2,000 in gold before the war. He purchased it for less than $ When he reached France on his way home he could not get any of financial institutions to buy it at price. He says it is now worth about $3.

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Representative Samuel E. Winslow of Massachusetts, who is chairman of the House interstate and foreign commerce committee, in charge of

Was a Conspicuous Prize Winner at the Flower Shows.

road legislation, finds surcease from his onerous duties in Congress in growing flowers. For many years he was a conspicuous prize winner at the flower shows in Worcester, Mass. During the war when there was an appeal to the people to save on coal consumption he shut up his greenhouses. He has another hobby—hospital work. He is chairman of the board in his home district, and has given considerable personal attention to the plans for hospitals for the world war heroes.

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Charles Evans Hughes, Secretary of State, who will be an outstanding figure in the international conference for limitation of armament, is used to overcoming obstacles, not only because he had to work hard to make his own way in life, but because for many years his one recreation was mountain climbing. Some sixteen to twenty years ago he was wont to go to Europe every summer and go strolling in the Alps. Then when his law practice tied him down he used to go into Maine and tramp the woods and scale the mountains. When he was elected Governor of New York fifteen years ago it put a stop to his recreation, but he had his family in the Adirondacks for a couple of summers, and occasionally he would go out with his son and some of his college chums and scale the mountains.

He started to play golf in 1899, but has never been able to give it enough time so that he could get to be a really good player. He tries to play three times a week now at the Chevy Chase Club. He goes out at 8 a.m., so as to get to his office in the State Department by 10—usually he gets there before 9 o'clock. He plays golf most often with Secretary Wallace of the Department of Agriculture.

Secretary Hughes plans to walk about three miles every day, whether he plays golf or not. He generally walks to and from his office. For more than twenty years he has been taking setting-up exercises and in all that time has never missed a day, except when he was traveling in a Pullman car.

Since March 4 he has been away from his desk only two days—Labor day and when he accompanied the President to William and Mary College.

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Discretion was the better part of valor for Representative Thomas L. Blanton of Texas the other day when he made an exchange of the "short and ugly words" with Representative William J. Burke of Pennsylvania. Representative Burke has a wide reputation as a "strong man," and is credited with "200 ring battles in his home state."

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C. W. Holman, secretary of the National Milk Producers' Association, and C. S. Barret, president of the National Farmers' Union, had breakfast together recently in Washington. They both ordered cantaloupes and the waiter brought each a small half of a melon. Now Mr. Barrett raises cantaloupes as a side line. After he had finished eating his half he picked up the menu and found they were 30 cents. "I wish I could sell my entire crop for 3 cents each," he remarked with a sigh.

Canopied Fields.

TRAVELLERS in the Connecticut valley may sometimes see many acres covered with white cheese-cloth supported, at a height of nine feet from the ground, on a framework of posts and wire. Under these vast tents Sumatra tobacco is grown. Experiments conducted by the Department of Agriculture led to the use of this system of protecting the tobacco plants, and the results have been found excellent. The light, sandy soil along the Connecticut river is well suited for the growth of Sumatra tobacco.

The United States government furnishes the seed and supervises the cultivation, preparation and sale of the product, the farmers paying the cost and receiving the profit. That the great cloth canopies can withstand storms was proved last year, when a hailstorm caused much damage to crops in open fields, but the acres of covered tobacco escaped injury. The cost of the shades is several hundred dollars an acre.